

Middlebury July 5<sup>th</sup> 1811

Dear Sir, Your favor of the 30<sup>th</sup> ult. is recd. by Mr. Ranney - and the contents particularly noticed -  
I regret the misfortune you met with the morning after you parted with us at Bristolport, I hope no lasting injury will result -

Some parts of your letter appear to be involved in doubt & mystery, at least are so to me - "a something indescribable in your feelings" yet not the hypo, "a disorder of the mind" - ~~perhaps~~ for its cause, "a certain anxiety for a thing out of reach" and the cure not found in "riches" nor in "pleasures", nor yet in "society" let it be even so "gay & animating", & even gaiety & novelty can relieve but for a moment - Surely this is as unintelligible to me, as indescribable by you - an anomaly indeed - not pretending to the skill of the Quaker Doctor, to determine & cure diseases by merely seeing a letter from the diseased, I shall not attempt to define your disorder or prescribe a remedy without seeing & consulting the patient, - & until that event, which God grant may be soon, I can only administer by way of advice, to that such as it is, you are welcome -

Rockwood, the present is an important period with you, on it essentially depends, not <sup>only</sup> your present, but future character, It



It is the precursor of the future man."  
"To be, or not to be, that's the question"

It is all important to get your mind settled on some object, let it be one worthy of you, let it be pursued in a steady course, & it is sure to lead to distinction - some one of the Roman poets says, "perseverentia vincit omnia"; let this

be fixed in your mind & I say, you are conqueror.

You talk of troubles & perplexities, & hence draw conclusions, hypothetically, as I should think, that you are, "miserable indeed" - there must be the

wanderings of an hallucinated imagination, for they can have no really existence.

You ask, "for what do we live?" There are many many things which create ties to life, some to be sure, stronger than others, - & happiness the pursuit of all, but pursued in a great diversity of ways - but still the boon & desideratum of a busy world - pleasures, honours, amusements, fashions, & riches, which last, in the minds of most people includes & secures all the rest. This is however, erroneous, for riches bring troubles, & the uncertainty of possession, and the attachment to them, are in those degrees alloy in the enjoyment of them - ~~conspicuous~~ is very unpaying, & without it life is tedious, more than that troublesome - Joys purely intellectual are not for men, unless men would be Angels, feed on ambrosia, drink those pure waters, whereof if they drink, they thirst no more - This is the Elysian Field ~~where~~ poets have wroth & sang so much - where we shall have more clear exhibitions by & by - Then man will cease to be, the enemy of man



as now when all are preying upon all.  
From their depredations they can scarcely  
be restrained even by the laws around in all their  
terrors - that this is true daily observation proves.  
Well, then, Cephias, we live in just such a world  
made up of just such folks - & here we are, &  
cant get away - & since it is so, we must  
make the best of it. and now there are  
certain things for us to do. & certain duties  
to be performed. this is an object worthy  
the exercise of the faculties which the  
god of nature has given us -  
The prospect is now large - for to undertake  
to direct how to exercise those faculties  
or perform those duties - would be to  
transcribe the writings & sayings of moralists  
divines, & even Revelation itself, and the  
dictates of conscience beside -  
Take reason for a guide, endeavor to  
be usefull, increase the quantum of  
happiness as much as possible, be  
courteous to others, & faithful to yourself  
guard against the chiefness, & wicked-  
ness with which you are surrounded.  
& take care not to deceive yourself.  
Never anticipate real, or creat imaginary  
troubles, but keep clear of the latter, and  
meet the former with a philosophical  
equanimity - so fortify & replenish  
your mind as to render it an asyllum  
in time of difficulty -  
Yours sincerely  
J. Doolittle

If you will answer this, I will reply - & to the queries - this also written in much haste -  
Mrs. D. joins me in respect to you & sincere wishes for your well fare -



Recd. Dr. Wm. W. W.  
July 5th 1811

Answered

10

Ephraim J. Rockwood Esq.

Atty at Law

Chester

Wt